

MANSION

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PENTHOUSE ALLEGEDLY LINKED TO 1MDB SCANDAL ASKS \$45 MILLION

Three years ago, a penthouse made headlines when it closed for \$50.9 million, setting the record for the priciest apartment ever sold in downtown Manhattan. Now, in the wake of allegations that it was purchased with funds related to a \$4.5 billion Malaysian financial scandal, the unit is returning to market for \$45 million, according to people with knowledge of the plans.

Authorities alleged that the owner of the penthouse, a company named 212 West 18th Street LLC, is controlled by Abu Dhabi businessman Khadem Al Qubaisi, who they say bought it with money illegally siphoned from Malaysian state fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd., known as 1MDB.

The 1MDB fund was started by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak to encourage economic development, but more than \$4.5 billion of its funds were misappropriated by high-level officials of 1MDB and their asso-



ciates between 2009 and 2015, according to the Justice Department.

Mr. Al Qubaisi's attorney declined to comment. An attorney for 212 West 18th Street didn't return a call seeking comment. 1MDB has previously denied any wrongdoing and said it would cooperate with any lawful investigation. Mr. Najib has denied wrongdoing, and has been cleared by Malaysia's attorney general.

The Justice Department moved last year to seize the penthouse, as well as several other properties in New York and Los Angeles, as part of

its fraud investigation into 1MDB, according to public filings. The Justice Department later stayed its seizure petition until it could complete a criminal investigation, filings show. A spokesperson for the Justice Department declined to comment.

Located at Walker Tower on West 18th Street, the nearly 6,000-square-foot apartment spans the entire top floor of the building.

Shaun Osher of Core, the company listing the property, said the unit is now priced to move.

—Katherine Clarke